

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: OCON, ESCAP
SUBJ: THIRTY-THIRD PLENARY SESSION OF ESCAP: SUMMARY AND
EVALUATION

REF: (A) BANGKOK 8842, (B) BANGKOK 8826, (C) BANGKOK 9277,
(D) BANGKOK 9139

1. SUMMARY. THE ESCAP SESSION WHICH CONCLUDED ON APRIL 30 WENT
LARGELY OVER FAMILIAR GROUND AND WAS UNEVENTFUL EXCEPT FOR THE
AGREEMENT ON THE REACTIVATION OF THE MEKONG COMMITTEE WHICH WAS
ANNOUNCED ON APRIL 29. HOWEVER, THE GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD
RECORDS SHOULD NOW BE AMENDED TO SHOW THAT LAST MINUTE COMPETITION
FROM THE COOK ISLANDS INDUCED THE SOVIET UNION TO WITHDRAW
ITS CANDIDACY FOR AN ELECTION IN WHICH IT WAS INTERESTED. THE
MAJOR DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE COMMISSION (1) CHARGED THE SECRE-
TARIAT TO PROCEED WITH WORK ON AN INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM AS A MATTER OF HIGHEST PRIORITY; (2) CALLED UPON THE
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SECRETARIAT TO ASSUME A MAJOR ROLE IN PROMOTING BOTH ECONOMIC
AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES OF THE
REGION; (3) SET UP AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL GOVERNING COUNCIL TO
PROVIDE POLICY GUIDANCE FOR ACTIVITIES OF THE REGIONAL TRAINING
AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS; (4) REQUESTED THE SECRETARIAT TO
EXPLORE WITH DEVELOPING ISLAND COUNTRIES OF THE PACIFIC WAYS OF
ENABLING THEM TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN THE WORK OF THE

COMMISSION; (5) REQUESTED THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO ESTABLISH A REGIONAL COORDINATION CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF COARSE GRAINS, PULSES, ROOTS AND TUBERS; AND (6) ASKED THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES OF CONVENING AN EARLY MEETING AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL TO DISCUSS INTRA-REGIONAL TRADE PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

2. AS INDICATED IN REF A, THE PRINCIPAL THEMES EMPHASIZED IN STATEMENTS MADE BY COUNTRY DELEGATIONS DURING THE COURSE OF THE MEETING WERE THOSE OF INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE. DISAPPOINTMENT WAS FREQUENTLY EXPRESSED THAT LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE AND THAT THE NUMEROUS INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS ON NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES CONSTITUTED A RAPIDLY MOVING MERRY-GO-ROUND WHICH WENT NOWHERE. LDC STATEMENTS WERE RESTRAINED, HOWEVER, AND THEIR DELEGATIONS OBVIOUSLY HOPED THAT THE FORTHCOMING CIEC MEETING IN PARIS WILL FINALLY PRODUCE SOME OF THE RESULTS THEY HOPE FOR. THE ONLY ATTEMPT TO MAKE SUGGESTIONS REGARDING A STRATEGY FOR THE THIRD DEVELOPMENT DECADE WAS MADE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, WHO ENCOURAGED NEPAL TO INTRODUCE A RESOLUTION WHICH WOULD HAVE INSTRUCTED THE SECRETARIAT TO WORK OUT A CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGY FOR THE 1980S WHICH EMPHASIZED SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE ALLEVIATION OF MASS POVERTY. INDIA, PAKISTAN, SRI LANKA, BANGLADESH AND INDONESIA PROMPTLY OBJECTED THAT A RESOLUTION OF THIS NATURE WAS NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE OVERRIDING NEED TO IMPLEMENT THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER, AND NEPAL SUBSEQUENTLY WITHDREW THE RESOLUTION.

3. THERE WERE VARIOUS INDICATIONS DURING THE SESSION OF A GROWING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TENDENCY TO ACCENTUATE THE ROLE OF THE PACIFIC AREA IN THE WORK OF ESCAP, A TREND WHICH WAS ENTHUSIASTICALLY SUPPORTED BY AUSTRALIA IN PARTICULAR. PAPUA NEW GUINEA WAS WELCOMED AS A NEW MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION, A NUMBER OF ESCAP REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS WERE RE-NAMED TO INCLUDE THE PACIFIC IN THEIR TITLES, AND THE COOK ISLANDS MADE A PERSUASIVE PLEA FOR ESTABLISHING A PACIFIC OFFICE OF ESCAP WHICH WOULD PARTICULARLY FACILITATE CONTACT WITH THE PACIFIC ISLAND MEMBERS.

4. THE ANNOUNCEMENT ON MAY 29 OF THE REACTIVATION OF THE MEKONG COMMITTEE, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS BY VARIOUS COUNTRIES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE WORK OF THIS COMMITTEE, ARE BEING COVERED IN A SEPTEL.

5. AS DISCUSSED IN REF D, THE SOVIET UNION AS A RESULT OF THE LAST MINUTE CANDIDACY OF THE COOK ISLANDS FOUND ITSELF ON THE MORNING OF APRIL 29 IN GRAVE DANGER OF BEING THE ONLY ONE OF 11 CANDIDATES WHICH WOULD NOT BE ELECTED TO THE NEW INTER-GOVERNMENTAL GOVERNING COUNCIL OF REGIONAL TRAINING AND RESEARCH

INSTITUTIONS. JUST AS THE ELECTION WAS ABOUT TO COMMENCE, THE SOVIET DELEGATE MADE A STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT. HE EXPRESSED REGRET THAT INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS HAD NOT RESULTED IN ACCEPTANCE OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL TO AMEND LAST YEAR'S RESOLUTION SO THAT THERE WOULD NOW BE 16 RATHER THAN 15 MEMBERS ON THE GOVERNING COUNCIL, AND THAT A SELECTION BY CONSENSUS OF ALL THE CANDIDATES WOULD TAKE PLACE. HE THOUGHT THAT THE NEED FOR EACH DELEGATION TO REFUSE THE OFFER BY ONE STATE TO SERVE ON THE COUNCIL WOULD NOT FACILITATE COOPERATION IN THE ESCAP AREA AND HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY AND THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES WOULD BRING NEW PROPOSALS TO NEXT YEAR'S PLENARY SESSION SO THAT THIS TYPE OF SITUATION WOULD NOT ARISE AGAIN. HE THEN ANNOUNCED THAT THE SOVIET DELEGATION HAD DECIDED TO WITHDRAW SO THAT ALL THE REMAINING CANDIDATES MIGHT BE ACCEPTED. HE HOPED THAT THIS ACTION WOULD BE GREETED WITH UNDERSTANDING AS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRENGTHENING OF COOPERATION WITHIN ESCAP. THIS GRACIOUS AND DIPLOMATIC STATEMENT, WHICH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONTRASTED SHARPLY WITH THE BLUNT AND SOMETIMES INSULTING TACTICS WHICH THE SOVIETS HAD EARLIER BEEN EMPLOYING ON THIS ISSUE, WAS GREETED WITH APPLAUSE.

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6. NINE RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION. THE U.S. DELEGATION INTERVENED ONLY OCCASIONALLY IN THE DEBATES OF THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE. IT FOUND THAT THE JAPANESE DELEGATION TENDED TO PROTECT MANY OF THE POSITIONS IMPORTANT TO THE U.S. AND FREQUENTLY, IN FACT, INSISTED ON A SOMEWHAT MORE CONSERVATIVE OUTCOME THAN THE U.S. WOULD HAVE FOUND NECESSARY. THE NINE RESOLUTIONS WHICH EMERGED WERE THE FOLLOWING:

A) A RESOLUTION ON THE INTEGRATED PROGRAM FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT REQUESTED THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO PROCEED QUOTE WITH THE EFFICIENT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERAGENCY COORDINATED PLAN OF ACTION, AND THE INTEGRATED PROGRAM OF WORK ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT AS A MATTER OF THE HIGHEST PRIORITY. UNQUOTE THE U.S. HELPED TO ENSURE THAT THE RESOLUTION INSTRUCTED THE ESCAP SECRETARIAT IN THIS REGARD TO CONSULT WITH MEMBER GOVERNMENTS AND TO WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CONCERNED AGENCIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

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B) A RESOLUTION ON ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING ESCAP COUNTRIES CAME OUT STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF QUOTE ORDERLY AND RAPID DECENTRALIZATION TO THE COMMISSION OF REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS, AS WELL AS THE TRANSFER OF EXECUTING AGENCY FUNCTIONS TOGETHER WITH THE DECENTRALIZATION OF THE RESOURCES, TO IMPLEMENT THOSE PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS WHICH COULD BEST BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE COMMISSION. UNQUOTE. IT CALLED UPON THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO TAKE A VIGOROUS ROLE IN PROMOTING ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES OF THE REGION AND REQUESTED THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL QUOTE TO GIVE EARLY CONSIDERATION TO THE STRENGTHENING OF THE SECRETARIAT SO THAT IT CAN DISCHARGE EFFECTIVELY THE MANDATE CONTAINED IN THIS AND EARLIER RESOLUTIONS UNQUOTE ON THIS SUBJECT.

C) THE RESOLUTION ON REGIONAL TRAINING AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS ESTABLISHED AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL GOVERNING COUNCIL TO PROVIDE POLICY GUIDANCE FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF THE REGIONAL TRAINING AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS. THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COOK ISLANDS WAS SO DELIGHTED BY HIS COUNTRY'S SELECTION TO THIS GOVERNING COUNCIL THAT HE PROPOSED ITS FIRST MEETING BE HELD IN THE COOK ISLANDS. HE ADDED THAT THE COOK ISLANDS PERHAPS DID NOT OFFER MUCH IN OTHER RESPECTS BUT THAT REPRESENTATIVES WOULD SURELY APPRECIATE THE SPARKLING BLUE WATER, THE WAVING PALM TREES, FRIENDLY HULA HULA GIRLS, ETC.

D) A RESOLUTION ON INCREASED PARTICIPATION BY THE DEVELOPING ISLAND COUNTRIES OF THE PACIFIC IN THE ACTIVITIES OF ESCAP ASKED

THE SECRETARIAT TO EXPLORE WITH THE DEVELOPING ISLAND COUNTRIES
WAYS OF ENABLING THEM TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN THE WORK
OF THE COMMISSION.

E. ANOTHER RESOLUTION REQUESTED THE SECRETARIAT TO ESTABLISH
A REGIONAL COORDINATION CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF
COARSE GRAINS, PULSES, ROOTS, AND TUBERS. PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA
SHARED THE RESERVATIONS OF THE U.S. DELEGATION REGARDING THIS
RESOLUTION BUT SUPPORT FOR IT WAS SO WIDESPREAD THAT WE DID
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NOT ACTIVELY OPPOSE IT.

F) ANOTHER RESOLUTION REQUESTED THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO
EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF CONVENING AN EARLY MEETING AT THE
MINISTERIAL LEVEL TO DISCUSS MATTERS AND PROBLEMS RELATING TO
TRADE IN THE REGION.

G) IN ADDITION, THE COMMISSION ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS ON ASSISTANCE
TO THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, ON ASSISTANCE TO LANDLOCKED
COUNTRIES, AND ON SHIPPING WHICH BROKE NO NEW GROUND.

7. AT VARIOUS TIMES DURING THE SESSION THERE WERE BITTER EXCHANGES
BETWEEN THE CHINESE AND SOVIET DELEGATIONS. DURING THE DRAFTING
OF THE FINAL REPORT, IT APPEARED FOR SOME TIME THAT THE CHINESE
WOULD INSIST ON SOME VERY STRONG LANGUAGE DIRECTED AGAINST THE
SOVIETS, AND THAT THE SOVIETS IN RESPONSE WOULD INSIST ON
LANGUAGE DENOUNCING THE CHINESE. HOWEVER, THE FILIPINO DELEGATION
THEN SUGGESTED A COMPLETELY INNOCUOUS SENTENCE ON THE VIRTUES
OF WORLD PEACE WHICH INDUCED THE CHINESE AND THE SOVIETS TO
WITHDRAW THEIR PROPOSALS.

8. THE INITIAL LAOTIAN CHARGES REGARDING SUBVERSIVE ACTIONS
BACKED BY THE THAI GOVERNMENT WERE REPORTED IN REF A. THE
VIETNAMESE DELEGATION HAD LITTLE TO SAY IN THE MEETING BEYOND
THE STATEMENT REPORTED IN REF B.
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